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Powers To Get Here's Mantle In Hometown

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BIG STONE GAP, Va. (AP) — The hill-country neighbors of U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers will welcome him home here tomorrow in ceremonies that may be long on speeches but definitely short on hoopla.

"It will be sort of a hero's welcome," said Big Stone Gap Mayor Carl Murphy. But, he said, there will be no parade, no motorcade, no bands when Powers revisits his native Wise County.

The low-keyed exercises will be jointly sponsored by the Wise County towns of Pound, where Powers grew up; Norton, where his father runs a cobbler's shop; and Big Stone Gap.

Big Stone Gap was picked as

the scene of the "welcome home" celebration because it has the necessary facilities — a city armory that will hold 1,500 persons.

"Everything we're going to do will be inside," said Mayor Murphy. "It shouldn't run more than an hour, the whole works. We're going to put a strict limit on speeches."

Although Virginia Gov. Albert Harrison has declined an invitation, U.S. Sen. Harry Byrd is expected. U.S. Sen. Willis Robertson is also unable to attend.

Murphy said he and other people in this area felt "That since he (Powers) has been cleared by the Central Intelligence Agency,



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he should be welcomed home. We want him to know we're glad to have him back." Y.

He said Carl McAfee of Norton, an attorney

and close friend of Powers and his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Oliver Powers, "has been in constant touch" with the pilot whose plane was downed over the Soviet Union in May 1960.

"We understand Powers will stay here a few days," Murphy said. He said he didn't know whether Powers' wife, Barbara, now in Millersville, would attend the welcome home ceremonies. "But I kind of believe she will."